

Chief, Occupational Therapy Message

COL Karen Cozean, Chief, Occupational Therapist Section

I would like to wish everyone a very successful and happy 2004! I think we can agree that 2003 was quite a memorable year for all of you, especially when it comes to taking care of soldiers. There truly is no higher calling than to care for these heroes who risk their life for a bigger cause. They face danger daily trusting that we (the AMEDD) will be there to take care of them if needed. I was very fortunate to meet and see in action during my travels throughout Iraq and Kuwait many PA's, PT's, DT's, and OT's who were doing just that, and doing a very fine job of what we are trained to do, and that is, taking care of soldiers. You can be proud that you have played a role in many of these soldiers' lives to help them in their recovery. Whether you are in the theaters of OEF or OIF, at the MEDCENs or MEDDACs, what you do is important in helping the soldier regain his function and I thank each officer and enlisted for the many long hours you provide to care for the soldier, their families, and the retired. You are making a difference and I am so very proud of each of you.

A quote by Ellen Metcalf reminded me of an opportunity for Occupational Therapy this past September. "You have to recognize when the right place and the right time fuse and take advantage of that opportunity. There are plenty of opportunities out there and you can't sit back and wait." This fall, CPT Jay Clasing was tasked by the 30th Medical Brigade Commander to write an information paper to support utilization of OT in the theater CSH's and also increase the number of PT providers in the CSH. Bottom line, his paper was approved and this week we presently have OT's/PT's in El Paso preparing to deploy. This is a good news story because health care providers recognized the need to have OT in the CSH and the system responded to this need. Some of our strongest advocates were orthopedic physicians and I especially would like to thank COL Mark Bagg, Orthopedic Consultant, and MAJ Mary Adams-Challenger (PT), for voicing and documenting the need for OT in their after action reports.

We presently have Occupational Therapy Assistants in the CSH's and I am here to tell you they are doing a fine job supporting the mission. While in Kuwait, I was able to visit SGT Brian Christman who was assigned to the 47th CSH. He was utilizing his N3 and 91W skills to support the Neuro-Psychiatric ward. SGT Erick Cedenio who is presently with the 21st CSH in Balad, is doing an excellent job supporting the OT/PT mission there. He has been a tremendous help to MAJ Adams-Challenger and has been flexible in cross training to support PT with patient care. Joining our N3's will be CPT Kurt Brower, CPT Joanna Atherton and SSG Tina Hamilton. I thank them for stepping up to the plate and their service, and I thank the clinic Chiefs who will be working short due to their staff's deployment. As it stands for now, they will be deployed for six months and assigned to the two CSH's in Iraq. History is in the making here, and we will continue to use this opportunity to reinforce our efforts to establish authorizations in the CSH for OT. This is one more step in the right direction.

Six months will go by quickly and their replacements will need to be identified. These OT's had less than three weeks to prepare to deploy when they received their warning order. They were ready because they were prepared. It is imperative that all of us be ready at a moments notice. It does not matter if you are PROFIS or not. As long as we wear this green uniform, any one of us could deploy, so have your affairs in order and be ready. I heard a good piece of advice from a PA friend of mine who has experience with deployments and we can't go wrong to follow it: "Be ready, be fit, and be flexible."

Another opportunity occurred in August when the Surgeon General Chartered the Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT). Subject matter experts (SME's) in all the behavioral health professions were represented on this team (Psychiatrist, Social Workers, Psychologists, a Clinical Nurse Specialist, Chaplain, Behavioral Health Specialists, OT, and an infantry officer who manages the suicide program in the G1 shop of the Pentagon). Our mission was to assess and provide recommendations to the OIF medical and line command concerning OIF-related mental health issues. MHAT evaluated the behavioral healthcare system of the OIF theatre and this is why I believed it necessary to have OT/SP representation on the team. We interviewed over 750 soldiers, visited and interviewed just about all the behavioral health providers in theater, and also interviewed many primary care providers to include PA's and PT's. It was an excellent opportunity to educate and market our services to many people I met throughout theater. I also marketed our N3 program and convinced three fine medics up in Mosul to begin our N3 training program this April.

Our AC/RC OT's are doing an outstanding job in Iraq and it was a pleasure to meet and see as many as I could during my travels. I'm pleased to report that most are leaders of their teams. They have the ability to "adapt and overcome" in an austere environment and they are frequently the catalyst for getting things done in their CSC Company and Detachments. They display the skills needed to survive in an environment that requires flexibility, patience and persistence and each one was passionate when they spoke about taking care of soldiers and the services they provided. You can see they are a photogenic bunch as we pay tribute to them within this report.

When the MHAT report can be released, I look forward to sharing some of the survey results with you, as it is very pertinent to our planning with Project Paratus (Please see LTC Steve Gerardi's comments in this Medallion for an update on Project Paratus). I was gone far longer than expected and my job did not stop just because I was away. I thank COL Hooper, COL DeMars and the OT region Chiefs for graciously helping out during my deployment.

Happenings and dates to remember...

We have three OT's who passed the National Certification Examination to become Certified Hand Therapists. Congratulations to you all for this achievement! They are: LTC Steve Gerardi, MAJ Matt St. Laurent, and Ms. Jackie Jurokowski who works at WBAMC.

Congratulations to our newest OT's, who completed their Internship at MAMC this December! LT Josef Otto's first assignment is at Ft. Hood and LT Julie Devine is assigned to WBAMC.

I would like to thank CPT Colleen Daniels who is presently at CHPPM completing her Ergonomic residency with COL Mary Lopez. As a new graduate from the Uniform Services University of the Health Sciences, she was tasked to develop and implement an Ergonomic training component into our Internship program at WRAMC. Injury prevention is our business and utilizing ergonomic principles for injury reduction/prevention will now be a part of the Interns training throughout their year. Our OT's will now receive this education at an earlier point in their career and be better prepared to provide this service to our customers. CPT Daniels has done a wonderful job organizing this new training module for the 04 Interns and I plan to have her share this program with you very soon.

The Physical Agents CD continues to progress. This is a big project and I thank MAJ Yvette Wood for keeping it on course while I was away. COL Len Cancio and LTC Karoline Harvey have been reviewing each lesson plan for quality of content and I thank the junior officers (who truly are the computer experts) who volunteered to test piloted one of the lessons. It looks like early summer will be the release date.

It is already that time of year to submit your articles for the **Myra L. McDaniel Annual Writers Award**. You have worked hard to publish, take it one step further and submit your article to LTC Steven Gerardi who chairs the board, by **27 February 04**. This is an opportunity to be recognized by your professional peers. To see the criteria for submission, go to the SP web page and under the awards tab, you can view the SOP.

The Combat Stress Casualties Course is coming up in May. Please see LTC Gerardi's article in this Medallion for he has plans to make it an informative two weeks. Again if you have not been, it is not too late. Block your schedules now as this course provides you the skill sets needed for a deployed environment.

Are you in need of information on the evaluation and treatment of upper extremity amputees? Tapes of our two-day workshop are now available for ordering. With the number upper extremity amputees being treated in our MTFs there has been a request for further information. We are offering seven videotapes that cover upper extremity evaluation and treatment techniques as presented by Diane Atkins, OTR/L, FISPO, Randy Alley, CPO, and other specialist in the field. We are sure that these tapes will provide you some valuable information to help you for your patient's rehabilitation process. The following tapes are available for your review:

1. UE Amputation Post Surgical Evaluation and Post-Operative Prosthetic Program
Diane Atkins, OTR/L, FISPO
A1701-02-0136
2. Functional Outcomes of Unilateral and Bilateral Amputees

Diane Atkins, OTR/L, FISPO
A1701-02-0139

3. Body and Electric Powered Prosthetic Training Principles
Diane Atkins, OTR/L, FISPO
A1701-02-0138

4. Bilateral UE Amputee Case Presentations
Diane Atkins, OTR/L, FISPO
A1701-02-0140

5. Rehabilitation Considerations of Amputee and Trauma Patient
Jennifer Menetrez, MD, MAJ (P)
A1701-02-0147

6. Psychosocial Aspects of Burn and Amputee Patients
Michael Yates, RN
A1701-02-0148

7. UE Body Powered and Electric Powered Prosthetic Component
Troy Farnsworth, CPO

Socket Designs and Systems
Randy Alley, CPO

UE Below Elbow Case Presentations
Diane Atkins, OTR/L, FISPO
A1701-02-0137

You will need to forward a blank tape and the title of the tape that you are requesting to:

MAJ Yvette Woods
Office of the Chief, SP Corps
ATTN: MCCA-CA
2250 Stanley Road, Suite 276A
Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234-6100

If you have questions concerning your request please contact MAJ Woods via email:
yvette.woods@us.army.mil. Please be sure to include a complete return mailing address
with all requests. Tapes will not be released until after 12 Jan 04.

In Closing

I would like to thank the following that served our Section and the Corps so very well
during their time in the Army. We wish them the very best:

I thank LTC Cassandra Lewis who retired this past November after 20+ years of dedicated service. Many will miss Cassy, as she was a wonderful leader, clinician, and educator. She taught many students throughout her career and was also one of our Directors for the WR Internship Program. She had the gift to make work fun and empowered her staff to work as a team. She certainly gave more to the organization than she received and many will remember her great sense of humor. San Antonio is home for Cassy and she will not be far away and we are grateful for her many contributions to make our organization a better place.

MAJ Chuck Walters will be retiring this May. He has given 21+ years of active federal service to the military. I do not think there is a better-rounded officer in the OT Section than Chuck. He has done it all, from psychiatry, to neuro-rehabilitation, to an expert CHT. He was a tremendous advocate for OT during his deployments and in the CSC Detachment, and he has multiple publications to his name. He has a gift for teaching and I'm proud to say he is presently working on his Doctorate in Health Sciences. Expect many more exciting things to come from Chuck and we wish him the very best as he begins a new Chapter in his career!

CPT Michelle Kennedy was in the opening ceremony for the January PA class of 2006 this week. She and OCS Leon Richardson are classmates, and both are motivated to begin their training. We are happy they are pursuing their goals of joining the ranks of SP PA's. They both will do a wonderful job and we wish them the very best as they work hard over the next two years. Sitting with the junior class was OCS Craigreon Wallace. He has successfully completed one semester and is one step closer of achieving his goal of becoming a PA as well.

CPT Karen Norton is presently on terminal leave. After completing her Internship at MAMC, she did an overseas tour at TAMC and then a one-year tour at FT. Hood with an interim deployment to Iraq with the 85th CSC serving our soldiers. She is presently working for the local school system and Karen, we thank you for your service in Iraq, and for your many contributions to soldier care.

LT Sean Smith is departing this month after completing his tour at WBAMC. He has decided to make a career change and plans to pursue a career in Nursing. Sean will be a better nurse with his background in OT and we thank him and wish him well as he heads back to school!

(See photos below)



1LT Sherielee Camacho, COL Karen Cozean, and 1LT Cheri Waide with the 113th CSC Company



CPT Jay Clasing in Baghdad, Iraq, serving with the 30th Medical Brigade



MAJ Beth Salisbury, with the 113th CSC Company



CPT Joel Carbon is the Fitness Team Leader in Mosul, Iraq with the 113th CSC Company



CPT Robert Montz, COL Karen Cozean, and SGT Dierdre Prator supporting the 528th CSC Detachment



CPT Florie Gonzales, SSG Edward Gayden, and CPT Karen Norton providing OT interventions with the 85th CSC Detachment